9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

upon with contempt. It must be noted that they live separately, having little or nothing in common with the other classes, and that the institution is dying a silent and natural death.

Songs.— There have been very many songs current among the Nayars even from a very remote period; and they are chiefly composed and sung in honour of deities, and are mostly prayers addressed to them. A translation of these is not here attempted, for they lose much of their beauty, but the following, however, are the most important of them :—

Bhadrakali Pattu :—These are songs which are sung in honour of Káli, and are supposed to have been composed by the Sudras of Palghat long before the Malayalam era. Certain dramatic songs also appear to have been composed about the same time, and refer to the deities on the hills as well as to the kings of the period. They are sung in towns and villages, between Anamala and Trichur in the east, and the Walayar forests on the other side. The ancient name of these localities was Cheranad, and it was the first place to be occupied by people, when Kerala was a marshy tract. As evidence of this, remains of houses are still to be seen at the foot of the hills. In a place of such historic importance were composed and sung these songs, which are so full of the ideas of the Vedanta and Yoga philosophies, and which give a clue to the nature of the people who once lived there. There is also another variety of songs referring to *Dárikavadham*, (murder of the demon Dárikan), and they are sung by a class of men called the *Kurippans*. There are also other old songs such as the *Sásta pittu* (songs in honour of Sásta).

Ganapati pattu (songs in honour of Ganapati) and serpent songs :—Among the old songs, those referring to agriculture, and composed during the third century of the Malayalam era, occupy a prominent place, and the agriculturists of the northern parts of the State even to-day follow the precepts laid down in these songs. But excepting, the song commemorating the deeds of *Meppayil Kunji Othenan*, the Robinhood of North Malabar, there are no songs which sing of the deeds of brave men.

The chief festivals.—(1). *Onam* :—This is an important national festival, which falls in the second half of August or the first half of September, and is celebrated in commemoration of Mahábali, an *Asura* king, whose reign is believed